1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33)1936 SR9 Carib SR9

881 841 **The Family.** With the advent of puberty the Carib boy and girl enter a period of experimentation and education by experience, which eventually leads to marriage. No rites mark the puberty of boys, but girls on the occasion of their first menstruation are secluded in one corner of the house. A small room is constructed for this purpose, shutting off the rest of the dwelling by partitions of manicol leaves. The girl, during the few days of her confinement there, is allowed to eat only cassava and water. Her hair is bobbed to the level of her ears, and her head and face covered by a cloth. During this time she is advised in an informal way, by her mother and other older female relatives, on female hygiene. She is also advised on the behavior and duties becoming to a wife, although instruction in marital duties is not confined to this time alone. No formal rites of a religious or magical nature are performed at this time. Opportunity is simply taken at this impressive physiological crisis in the girl's life to impress upon her certain facts which all married women should know. The technique of the sexual act is explained in some detail, care of the body during the menstrual period is described, and the restrictions placed upon women at menstrual periods are outlined. A special loin cloth of the usual pattern, but which is worn only during menstruation, is prepared for the girl. The girl is told that during her period a woman is not allowed to eat meat, to prepare food, or to touch a man's hunting implements. She must remain in her hammock, and is allowed only to spin cotton. A man who eats food prepared by a woman during her period will never be well, and bad luck will attend his hunting efforts if a menstruating woman touches his weapons.

836 For several years following puberty the young people of both sexes carry on a certain amount of sexual experimentation. Usually at sprees, when the rules of decorum are somewhat relaxed, the unmarried boys and girls sleep together as a matter of course. They are encouraged by their elders, who compose songs and jokes upon the subject, and arrange to make such activities more or less convenient. A young man visiting a strange settlement is usually provided with an unmarried girl, toward whom he may direct his advances, and, as a part of the social dance which accompanies drinking, all of the women make joking advances to the unattached men. There is sometimes a certain amount of rivalry

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1: Gillin SR 9 Carib SR 9

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[See also 527 in which visiting and hospitality are considered part of the typical Carib Spree.)

of external resources. Larger numbers of people have come to live near each other without immediate cooperative bonds. Visiting commonly takes place during cassiri sprees which now last a number of hours rather than the several days reported by Gillin (1936:65). Among neighbors, contacts depend on the inclination and personalities of the people involved. This aspect of community life is foreshadowed in the school experience[7] of the children. They are brought together in age categories to learn, play, and form relationships on an associational basis. More permanently settled in centralized locations, the Upper Barama River Carib population has become organized as a local, small-scale society within the overarching national political economy.

However, the resource base on which this population depends remains fluid. For the majority of people, external resources are not reliable. Thus, agriculture in rain forest soil remains a prerequisite for permanent settlement. The encapsulation of this population relative to transportation and communication networks and the lack of resource-storing mechanisms have already been discussed. As a consequence, the Upper Barama River Carib population utilizes all resources for the subsistence they provide. Institutional elaboration among this population is absent. Instead, the household, albeit changed in composition in some cases, has remained the primary cooperative social unit. It is the smallest unit capable of securing a livelihood in the ubiquitous rain forest. Such organization has been maintained throughout the flux in regional contacts and external resources. The continued emphasis on the individual within the household context is reflected in the kinship system.